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Katharine Lee Reid Appoints Curators of Contemporary and African Art

CLEVELAND — Katharine Lee Reid, director of the Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA), announced two key curatorial appointments today: Jeffrey D. Grove of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, has accepted the post of associate curator of contemporary art; and Constantine Petridis of Antwerp, Belgium, has accepted the post of assistant curator of African art.

Commenting on the two appointments, Reid said: "I am very pleased to be making these important additions to our curatorial staff. Jeffrey Grove will invigorate a wide interest in art of our time in this community and expand our visibility as an active participant in contemporary art. Constantine Petridis, with his strong scholarly credentials and professional museum background, will enhance the presence of our African collection and programs, especially as we anticipate his teaching responsibilities in a joint appointment with Case Western Reserve University."

Jeffrey Grove is currently curator of The Malrite Company, a Cleveland-based group building the 80,000-square-foot International Spy Museum in Washington, D.C., scheduled to open in 2002. Prior to that, he served for four years as curator of exhibitions at the Akron Art Museum, where he was responsible for eight to twelve exhibitions annually, all focused on modern and contemporary art. Among those he organized were **Fame and Misfortune: Andy Warhol's Portraits** and **Liza Lou: Bead the World**. He advocated and pursued acquisitions of major new works by Lari Pittman and Doris Salcedo, as well as historically important examples by Sophie Calle, David Salle, and Raoul Hague.

Speaking of his appointment, Grove commented: "My passion and desire to foster greater public appreciation for contemporary art and artists is of absolutely fundamental importance to me, and is a path to which I eagerly return. I'm honored to join the distinguished staff of the CMA, with its first-class collection, outstanding educational resources, and potential for shaping an important presence on the international contemporary art scene. As an advocate for contemporary art, my objective is to capture audiences in a thoughtful and productive dialogue with the thrilling yet often-challenging issues that concern today's artists, whether by helping visitors better understand the

idiosyncratic nature of a particular artist's work or by encouraging them to surrender to visual pleasure."

Grove obtained his Ph.D. in art history from Case Western Reserve University (CWRU) in 1999 and is currently revising his dissertation, *Robert Mapplethorpe's Self-Portraits*, for publication. He is co-author of *Lee Krasner: A Catalogue Raisonné* (Harry N. Abrams, 1995). He has an M.A. in art history and archaeology from the University of Missouri (Columbia, Mo., 1992) and a B.F.A. in industrial design from the University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign, Il., 1985). An Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship in the Humanities (1996) is among his numerous honors and awards.

In 1990–1991, Grove was a fellow in the CMA's modern art department, assisting Tom E. Hinson, then curator of contemporary art, with exhibitions and acquisitions. The position of contemporary curator opened when Katharine Lee Reid appointed Hinson full-time curator of photography in April 2000 in an expansion of CMA's curatorial staff. Grove will assume his duties at the CMA Aug. 6, 2001.

The position of assistant curator of African art is also new since Reid became CMA director last year. Constantine Petridis's professional experience combines teaching, curatorial work, and field research. Petridis's time in the U.S. has included two fellowships at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. He is working with the Antwerp Ethnographic Museum on an exhibition on the history of African art studies, opening this autumn; he is the editor and principal author of the accompanying catalogue. The exhibition is focused on the life and work of Frans M. Olbrechts (1899–1958), whose first ethnographic fieldwork was among Native American peoples. A postdoctoral fellowship from the Belgian American Educational Foundation enabled Petridis to spend the academic year 1998–99 in the United States researching Olbrechts's work here, especially Olbrechts's studies with Franz Boas at Columbia University.

Petridis has taught Central African art at the graduate level and an undergraduate seminar on African art studies at Ghent University, and is assisting in the reinstallation of Ghent University's ethnographic collections. In an internship at the Antwerp Ethnographic Museum (1991–1993), Petridis co-organized the exhibition **Face of the Spirits: Masks from the Zaire Basin**, which traveled to the National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Discussions are underway with CWRU and the museum to make this a joint position, shared equally between the museum and CWRU's department of art history and art.

Samuel M. Savin, dean of CWRU's College of Arts and Sciences, commented: "I'm very excited about this second joint faculty position with the Cleveland Museum of Art. It will strengthen not only our art history program but also our ties to the museum. I'm particularly pleased that this faculty member adds depth and breadth to our focus on African and African-American studies."

(The other joint appointment is curator of American painting and professor of American art, held by Henry Adams since 1997.)

Commenting on his appointment, Petridis said: "African objects are generally more than 'art for art's sake,' so it is only through equal consideration of both forms and meanings that one can gain insight into the complex nature of the arts of Africa. I look forward to further combining research and teaching and curatorial work and thus making scientific findings on the arts of Africa accessible to a large audience of students and laypersons."

Petridis obtained his Ph.D. in art history from Ghent University in 1997, writing his dissertation on the arts of the Luluwa people of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. His M.A. and B.A. in art history and archaeology are also from Ghent University. He will assume his duties at CMA in January 2002.

Formerly at CMA, one curator oversaw art of the Americas (pre-Columbian and Native American) and African art. Susan E. Bergh joined the CMA staff in April 2000 as full-time associate curator of art of the Americas.

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